

Rules for tolling hunting trials (B)

Approved by Swedish Kennel Club (SKK) for the period 1st of January 2022 to 31st of December 2026.

Introduction

The Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever is a hunting dog specialized for duck and goose hunting.

The traditional tolling hunt can be done, if there are birds resting on water, close to a shore where the hunter has prepared blinds for hiding or where the hunter can use the terrain to carefully approach the shoreline. The birds are within sight of the hunter, but out of shooting range. The hunter and the toller works together to get the swimming birds closer to the shore and within shooting range.

The toller and the hunter sneaks carefully towards to shoreline, not showing themselves to the birds. The hunter stays hidden, while throwing a tolling object (a ball, a dummy, a stick, et cetera) for the toller to fetch and bring back five to ten times.

This tolling work should arouse the birds' interest, and when the toller after this work stays calm and hidden, the curious birds are drawn closer to the shore. In a tolling hunt, this may be repeated many times for up to ten minutes - the toller alternates between playful tolling work and calm waiting, between activity and passivity.

When the game has been drawn within shooting range, the hunter comes out of hiding, and the birds lift from the water. When the hunter has fired the shots, the toller should retrieve the fallen birds on water, in reeds and on land. The toller must therefore switch between the tolling work's more playful style and the retrieving dog's careful handling of the game.

The toller can also be able to work as a retrieving dog in other forms of duck and goose hunting.

§ 1 Purpose

The purpose of the hunting trials and hunting tests is to assess the qualities of the participating dogs as a guidance for the continuous breeding work.

§ 2 Organization and approval

Official hunting trials in accordance to these rules are organized by the Swedish Spaniel and Retriever Club (SSRK). For each official hunting trial - location, date, class(es) and judge(s) - must be approved by the board of SSRK.

For all hunting trials, there should be a designated test leader (provledare) and a commissioner (kommisarie).

- a) The judge is responsible for that the hunting trial is conducted according to the decided official rules. The judge has the right to change the set up of the trial during the day. The judge must be member of the SSRK or a foreign retriever club.
- b) The commissioner is responsible for starting lists and iprice lists, and is responsible for the handling of protests.
- c) The test leader is responsible for the organization of the hunting trial, and the safety of the hunting trial.
- d) A hunting trial approved by the board of SSRK can not be cancelled, without the approval of the board of SSRK (SSRK Hs).

§ 3 Right to participate

Tolling hunting trials are only open for the breed Nova scotia duck tolling retriever.

At the time of entry, the dog must have the qualifications required to start in the class where it is entered. If a dog during a hunting trial qualifies for a higher class, and this is organized at that hunting trial, the organizers may allow a dog to start a second time if the class is not full.

Membership requirements

The dog owner must be a member of SSRK, or a corresponding foreign club (breed club or retriever club).

The dog handler must be a member of the Swedish Kennel Club (which includes SSRK), or a corresponding foreign club (kennel club).

Registration requirements

Swedish-owned dogs and dogs partly owned by Swedish owners must be registered in SKK.

For foreign-owned dogs, a copy of the registration certificate must be sent to SKK and this must be registered in their data base.

If the requirements above are not met, the results awarded to a dog at the hunting trial will be canceled.

Results awarded are registered by SKK.

Limited number of entries

The number of possible entries at a tolling hunting trial must be announced when the trial is announced. The number is decided by the organizers.

If there are more dogs entered than the possible entries, a draw must take place immediately after last day of entry. The organizers can prepare a list of substitutes (reserves), if there are more dogs entered than the possible entries. If there are reserves eligible to start, and dogs that has qualified for a higher class at the actual trial, the reserves has precedence.

The draw takes place in accordance with the decisions by SSRK Hs.

At the Toller Special, the Toller Club may ask SSRK Hs for changes in limitations and rules for the draw.

At the hunting trial, these may not enter:

- a) A dog belonging to the test leader or commissioner on duty.
- b) A dog belonging to the serving judge, or judge in training. A judge or judge in training may start in another class at the trial, if this is judged by another judge.
- (c) A dog that has been owned, kept, or personally trained by the judge or the judge in training the last six months before the hunting trial.
- d) A dog owned by someone from a serving judge's household.
- e) A bitch in season.

§ 4 Registration and fees

Registration and payment of the entry fee must be made in accordance with current instructions.

The entry fee is refunded:

- a) If the announced trial is canceled.
- b) If a trial has more entered dogs than possible entries, and a dog didn't get a possibility to start.
- c) If a dog falls ill, is injured or dies before the trial - a veterinary certificate or a certificate from a person well-known within the SSRK organization, must be sent in to the organizer within three working days after the trial.
- d) If a bitch goes in heat - a written certificate issued by a veterinarian, or by a well-known person within the SSRK organization must be sent in within three working days after the trial.

- e) If a dog, that after the entry to the current trial, has received prize at another trial and this prize stops participation at the current trial - the handler should inform the organizer as soon as possible and not later than four days after the prize was taken.
- f) If the entry fee is refunded, the organizer has the right to deduct parts of the fee to compensate for administrative costs.

§ 5 Classes

Beginner class (Nkl)

For dogs that have reached **12 months of age** on the first day of the trial.

A dog that has received an **"Excellent"** may remain in the class during the current calendar year, however, in the event of more entries than the possible number of dogs, it must leave place for a dog that has not yet received a **"Excellent"**.

A dog does not have the right to return to Nkl, after starting in Ökl.

Open class (Ökl)

For dogs that have received one **"Excellent" (or "1st prize" before 1/1/2022)** in the Beginner Class at an official tolling hunting test, and who have not yet received two **"Excellent" (or "1st prize" before 1/1/2022)** in the Open class.

A 1st prize or "excellent" awarded at an official tolling trial, Beginner Class, with cold game in another country - also entitles the dog to enter in Open class. If the official tolling trials in Beginner Class are organized on dummies in another country, a 1st prize or "excellent" for a dog registered in this country, entitles the dog to enter Open class.

A dog does not have the right to return to Ökl, after starting in Ekl.

Elite Class (Ekl)

For dogs that have received two **"Excellent" (or "1st prize" before 1/1/2022)** in Open Class on tolling hunting trials. One of these prizes may have been obtained in Ökl or equivalent in an official tolling hunting test with cold game in another country.

A dog that has received three **"Excellent" (or "1st prize" before 1/1/2022)** may remain in the class, however, in the event of more entries than the maximum number of dogs, it must leave place for a dog that has not yet received three **"Excellent" (or "1st prize" before 1/1/2022)**.

Practical tolling hunting test

For dogs that have received at least two **"Excellent" (or "1st prizes" before 1/1 2022)** in Elite Class on tolling hunting trials. **One of these prizes can have been awarded at an official tolling hunting trial with cold game in another country.**

§ 6 General setup for the tolling hunting trial

The tolling trial is set up in the available terrain, to give the judge the best possibilities to assess the dogs' qualities on land and on water - and especially in the tolling work.

The trial covers situations from a traditional tolling hunt. A hunter with a toller has scanned the water for resting ducks or geese. When birds are discovered, the hunter and dog carefully moves down to the shore and into a hiding place by the water. The tolling work attracts the birds and they swim closer and within firing range. Shots are fired, birds fall, and are then retrieved.

The test site should preferably have enough water vegetation, so cold game laying on water aren't always in plain sight for the dog.

During the trial, situations that will happen during a tolling hunt, are simulated. For some game, shots are fired and the dog and handler will see the throw and mark the spot where the game fell. For some game, shots are fired when the dog are working with other tasks - the handler will be told where the game fell - the dog should then be sent blind and directed to the spot by the handler. For some game, neither the dog or the handler knows exactly where the birds fell, only in which area - the dog should be sent to independently search the designated area in the terrain. The search area can be both land

and water. In addition, the dog's ability to stay calm and quiet in stressful situations - like when shots are fired or game falls - should be assessed.

The toller is used on duck and goose hunts with shotguns, and the distances to the falling game shouldn't be longer than 50 meters. The distances at the test area should be adapted to prevailing external circumstances.

Before the start of the trial, the judge must inform the participants about the set up of the trial. The judge decides how and where the handler may move during the trial, and whether the game should be retrieved in a certain order or if handler/dog can decide this. The dog should be without a leash throughout the whole trial, unless the judge announces otherwise.

The judge must have the opportunity to assess the dog's working ability and the dog's obedience in different situations. Marks should be thrown so that the dog doesn't see the game from the starting position. The shooter must be positioned so that the marks fall within firing range. The shots should attract the dog's attention to the tasks ahead.

The dog's ability to work on water and land should be assessed in one context. The test area should not be divided into different terrain areas, and unnecessary long walks between different parts of the area should be avoided.

The set up of the tolling trial may change depending on the natural possibilities in the test area. The test leader and the judge should coordinate the set up to a suitable level of difficulty within the available test area.

The game

The test leader is responsible for the condition of the cold game used. At the trial, only game in condition as newly shot game, should be used. Frozen game, that hasn't been thawed, must not be used.

The judge should ensure the quality and storage of the game during the trial.

Only game (duck and geese) that in nature reacts to a dog tolling can be used at the tolling hunting trial.

§ 7 Implementation of the trial

a. Beginner class (Nkl)

The dog should have at least six opportunities to retrieve cold game, at least two of these should be on deep water. At least three shots should be fired for each dog. The set up of the test should make it possible for the judge to assess sneaking/approach to the tolling net, tolling work, marks, will to please and will to cooperate, and free search.

b. Open class (Ökl)

The test area should have waters comparable to more difficult hunting terrain. The dog should have at least nine opportunities to retrieve cold game, and **at least four of these should be on water (with at least two on deep water)**. At least four shots should be fired for each dog. The set up of the test should make it possible to assess sneaking/approach to the net, tolling work, marks, will to please and will to cooperate, blind retrieves, and free search.

c. Elite Class (Ekl)

Elite class is in principle arranged as Open class, but with increased difficulties. These difficulties could be using more than one net in the tolling work, disturbances during tolling work, tougher and more difficult terrain, more difficult marks, more challenging blind retrieves, and games falling in trickier sites.

d. Practical tolling trial

In the practical tolling hunting trial the judge should be able to assess the dog's ability to attract living ducks or geese through tolling, as well as the dog's retrieves and handling of warm game. Shots should be fired and game retrieved.

In a practical tolling trial, the judge may shoot. Other hunters can be used.

At a practical tolling trial both the handler, and all other participants, must have a national hunting card (statligt jaktkort)

To pass the practical tolling trial, the dog and handler should do two tolling works successfully attracting birds within shooting range, as well as at least one warm game should have been retrieved in a correct mode.

§8 Subjects of assessment

The tolling hunting trial are arranged to assess a dog's ability to attract birds and its will to work, find and retrieve fallen birds on land and on water.

The following qualities should always be assessed.

a. Will to please

Will to please or will to cooperate is an expression covering how easily the dog can be led and handled in differing situations during the hunting trial. The dog's will to please is evaluated throughout the whole trial. It is expected from a toller to follow the handler obediently, attentively and compliantly through the terrain.

Repeated commands and corrections from the handler to keep the dog in place affects the final price level. If the dog goes completely out of hand, this is a disqualifying fault and entitles the judge to stop the test.

b. Tolling

The tolling trial always starts with tolling - the sneaking approach to the net and the tolling work at the net. The dog should be unleached before sneaking begins. The shooter should not participate in the sneaking approach to the net.

The tolling work should attract ducks and geese on water, to come closer and within shooting distance. The tolling runs should get the birds interested and curious. When the birds start moving towards the hiding place, the dog can be hidden behind the net. If and when birds hesitates, the dog can be sent out for more tolling. At the tolling trial, the judge instructs the handler when the dog should be active or passive.

When requested, the dog should wait calmly and quietly in the hiding place, behind the net. When the shot or shots are fired, the dog should be on the side of the net, so that it can see and mark the falling game. Before the shots, the judge must give a signal to the handler.

The tolling work should preferably be in a playful style and in good speed. Playfulness, that doesn't affect the speed and tempo of the tolling, is preferred and seen as an benefit for the dog. In Ökl (Open) and Ekl (Elite), the dog should retrieve the tolling object without commands. The tolling runs are usually on open terrain or cleared paths in Nkl (Beginners), but can be in rougher terrain in higher classes.

In Nkl (Beginners) the tolling ends when the first shot is fired. In higher classes there can be more than one tolling work.

Lack of interest, or totally unfocused tolling, is a serious fault, and entitles the judge to stop the test.

c. Search

In the free search the dog should cover the whole terrain, both the more open and the more difficult parts, efficiently and without waste of time. The search area should also include work in water. The judge may instruct the handler to send the dog to search in a specified area of the terrain.

Inefficient search is a disadvantage for the dog. A completely insufficient search entitles the judge to stop the test.

d. Speed

The dog should work in good speed, without losing focus, or the ability to locate game. Low speed or slow work is a disadvantage for the dog.

e. Endurance

The dog must show good perseverance during all the presented tasks at the test. Lack of endurance is a disadvantage for the dog.

f. Nose

The dog must show a good nose, i.e. it must be able to effectively locate game with the help of scents and prevailing wind. It is a serious fault if the dog doesn't use its nose, but caution should be exercised when assessing this, as the winds and the scents can be difficult to determine.

g. Blind retrieves / Directions

The handler should be able to send and direct the dog to a specified place in the terrain. This specified place can be on land or on water. The blind retrieve should be efficient and quick.

It is a disadvantage to the dog, if the handler isn't able to direct it to the specified place, or if the work is ineffective with many corrections and signals.

If the dog goes completely out of hand, the judge is entitled to stop the test.

h. Marking

This refers to the dog's ability to concentrate on falling game, to remember where it fell, and then quickly locate and retrieve it.

Poor concentration and marking ability should be considered a disadvantage to the dog.

i. Reaction to shot

Fear of gunshots, or uncontrollable agitation when shots are fired, are serious faults, which entitles the judge to stop the test.

j. Steadiness

The dog should be calm, quiet and steady, when following the handler in the terrain, and when behind the tolling net. In the first part of the tolling trial, the dog should be able to switch between the spontaneous playful retrieves of the tolling object, and the correct handling of cold game.

The dog should stay calm and quiet when shots are fired, when game is falling, and if it should come in contact with living game in the terrain. When the dog is expected to stay still (standing, sitting, lying down), it should remain calm and quiet. Steadiness with few or no commands from the handler is an advantage for the dog.

If the dog gets agitated and uncontrollable, it is a serious fault, which entitles the judge to stop the test.

k. Will to retrieve

The dog should be spontaneous and quick to pick up and directly return with the game, without hesitation or without repeated commands from the handler. A clear refusal to retrieve a located game is a serious fault, which entitles the judge to stop the test.

The criteria of judging should be:

The will to pick up the game.

The will to quickly and direct bring the game to the handler.

l. Retrieval grip

The game should be retrieved in such way, that it does not slip out of the mouth, that it doesn't hinder the dog's movements, and that the game isn't damaged by the dog's teeth. The delivery of the game must be in hand in Ökl (Open) and Ekl (Elite). **In Nkl (Beginners) it is preferred that all game are delivered in hand.**

The criteria of judging the grip should be:

The correctness of the grip.

The softness of the grip.

The delivery of the game to the handler.

The grip is not assessed during tolling work.

Grips that damage the game is a serious fault, which entitles the judge to stop the test.

m. Swimming / technique

The dog should have an efficient way of swimming.

Inefficient and/or splashing swimming should be considered a disadvantage to the dog.

n. Water passion

The dog should quickly and without hesitation enter water. It should be bold and unaffected of water vegetation.

Lack of boldness in water should be considered a disadvantage to the dog.

Refusal to enter water is a serious fault, which entitles the judge to stop the test.

o. Dog tolerance

Reglegated by the common rules of SKK.

§9 Interruption of the trial

If the dog performs a completely unsatisfactory work, this entitles the judge to stop the test.

Serious faults, that entitles the judge to stop the test, are:

Completely unsatisfactory tolling work, completely unsatisfactory search, dog completely out of hand, strong fear of gunshots, excitement making the dog difficult to control, obvious refusal to retrieve found game, grip that harms the game, refusal to enter water.

If the judge during the trial deems the performance of the dog as "Not sufficient", this does not justify the judge to stop the test.

A handler / dog that stops the trial before all tasks are solved will receive a "Not sufficient" (NS).

§ 10 Assessment

The judge should make her or his opinion about the dog's work according to the decided rules for the tolling hunting trials.

After the trial, the judge should give each participant / handler both a verbal summary and a written protocol with all the criteria in §§8a-o. This should also be done with dogs that receives a "Not sufficient" or when the judgement was stopped.

The judgment based on the judge's perception of the dog's work is final.

§ 11 Price levels.

The price given to the dog should follow the judge's overall impression of the dog's work at the trial, the dog's general efficiency, and it's capacity as a hunting dog in different situations. The tolling work is decisive for deciding the highest price the dog can receive.

Quality assessment is applied in all classes.

The dog is awarded "Excellent", "Very good", "Good", or "Not sufficient".

To get "Excellent" or "Very good", the dog should have made more than acceptable work in all the criteria mentioned in §8.

A particularly excellent dog can be awarded an "Excellent with honors". This can be awarded in all classes.

In the event of an injury (dog or handler), which prevents the safe completion of the test, the test is stopped and the dog will receive "Can't be judged".

At a practical hunting test, the only given prices are "Passed" or "Failed to pass". In the event of an injury, or if there are not birds at the test area, the dog will receive "Can't be judged".

a. Beginner class (Nkl)

In this class, above all, the dog's will to work and will to please should be judged.

In order to receive "Excellent", the dog should show very good will to work, will to retrieve, and will to please, and it should not show any serious faults or shortcomings in the work.

For "Very good", the dog should show good will to work and will to retrieve, while some errors or shortcomings can be accepted.

For "Good", the dog should show good will to work and an acceptable will to retrieve, while even clear mistakes and shortcomings can be accepted, if these can be seen as inexperience and/or youth.

b. Open class (Ökl)

In order to receive "Excellent", the dog must complete all tasks at the tolling trial in a convincing way, and be considered a good hunting dog.

For "Very good", the dog should perform a good trial, while some errors or shortcomings can be accepted.

For "Good", the dog should perform a good trial, with no faults or shortcomings that should exclude the dog from a price.

c. Elite class (Ekl)

In elite class, high demands should be placed on the dog's work in all aspects and criteria.

In order to receive "Excellent", the dog must complete the trial in a very convincing way, and be considered a very good hunting dog.

For "Very good", the dog should perform a very good trial, with only minor errors or shortcomings.

For "Good", the dog should perform a good trial, with few faults or shortcomings.

d. Practical tolling trial

For the dog to pass in the practical tolling trial, it is required that the dog can show two successful tolling works that lures birds within shooting range, as well as at least one retrieval of a newly shot game.

§ 12 Instructions for handlers

Dog handlers are required to know the rules for tolling hunting trials, but have the right to ask the judge questions regarding the procedure and the trial before the start. **A handler must be able to move within the test terrain.**

The decisions, assessments and prices given by the judge should not be discussed at the trial, or in public after the test.

It is forbidden to physically discipline a dog. Violation of this, results in exclusion from the trial.

Handlers should strive to lead their dogs, so that they work with joy and willingness.

Commands and signals should be low-key and sparse. Physical contact with the dog during the test, with the purpose of calming or correcting it, is not permitted.

Training collars, et cetera, that the dog may associate with pain or punishment, are not allowed during the test.

§ 13 Protest

The judgments can be changed in the following cases:

- a) If errors of a technical nature have been committed.
- b) If the dog didn't have the right to participate, according to current rules.

Participants can thus not protest against the judge's general judgements and/or given prices.

The case of changing a judge's decisions, after the test, can be initiated:

- After a protest from a participant in the test, who was affected by the decision.
- After a notification from the test leader, the organizing committee, or from the judge who made the decision.
- After a decision by SSRK, if there was special reasons.

A protest from a participant must be in writing. It must be submitted to the commissioner, before the end of the trial on the same day as the disputed decision was announced. A protest fee, equal to double entry fee, must be paid for the protest to be processed. If a protest is submitted by someone not entitled to submit a protest, or if the protest is not accompanied by the protest fee, the protest shall be rejected immediately. Such a decision is made by the commissioner.

After hearing the judge, the commissioner decides whether the protest can be considered justified. If the protest is accepted, the dog's price will be removed from the price list and results, and the entry fee plus the protest fee is refunded.

If a protest is rejected by the board of SSRK, the appellant has the right to appeal to the Hunting Committee of the Kennel Club (SKK JhK) within 30 days of SSRK's decision. Changes to the results list can be made up to two years after the tolling trial.